

Emergency Support Function #9 – Urban Search and Rescue Annex

ESF Coordinator:

Department of Homeland Security/Emergency
Preparedness and Response/Federal Emergency
Management Agency

Primary Agency:

Department of Homeland Security/Emergency
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Support Agencies:

Department of Agriculture
Department of Commerce
Department of Defense
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Homeland Security
Department of Justice
Department of Labor
Department of Transportation
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
U.S. Agency for International Development

Introduction

Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 – Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) rapidly deploys components of the National US&R Response System to provide specialized life-saving assistance to State, local, and tribal authorities during an Incident of National Significance. US&R activities include locating, extricating, and providing onsite medical treatment to victims trapped in collapsed structures.

Scope

The National US&R Response System integrates US&R task forces, Joint Management Teams (JMTs), and technical specialists.

- The system is built around a core of task forces prepared to deploy immediately and initiate operations in support of ESF #9. These task forces are staffed primarily by local fire department and emergency services personnel who are highly trained and experienced in collapsed structure search and rescue operations and possess specialized expertise and equipment.

- JMTs provide coordination and logistical support to US&R task forces during emergency operations. They also conduct needs assessments and provide technical advice and assistance to State, local, and tribal government emergency managers. The JMTs are comprised of personnel from US&R task forces; Federal, State, local, and tribal government emergency response organizations; and private-sector organizations.
- Technical specialists provide expertise in various US&R disciplines and are mobilized as needed.

Policies

- The National US&R Response System assists and augments State and local US&R capabilities.
- Upon activation by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under the National Response Plan (NRP), US&R task forces are considered Federal assets under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and other applicable authorities.

Concept of Operations

General

DHS/Emergency Preparedness and Response/Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS/EPR/FEMA) may activate the National US&R Response System for any actual or potential Incident of National Significance likely to result in collapsed structures that may overwhelm existing State and local US&R resources. Activation is dependent upon the nature and magnitude of the event, the suddenness of onset, and the existence of US&R resources in the affected area.

Organization

Headquarters

- The National US&R Response System consists of US&R task forces, JMTs, and technical specialists.
 - The core of the system is 28 task forces sponsored by State and local government emergency response organizations.
 - The US&R Response System is comprised of more than 5,000 individuals.
 - Each deployed task force is comprised of 70 individuals organized into 35 positions (the task forces are 3-deep in total).
 - Positions are organized into seven functional teams (management, search, rescue, planning, logistics, medical, and hazardous materials (HAZMAT)) staffed to permit 24-hour operations.
- JMTs are organized, trained, and mobilized to:
 - Conduct a comprehensive US&R needs assessment;
 - Provide technical US&R assistance, support, and advice to Federal, State, local, and tribal officials;

- Provide US&R management and coordination assistance and expertise to the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) ESF #9 staff, the Emergency Response Team (ERT) ESF #9, and the Federal Coordinating Officer or Federal Resource Coordinator at the Joint Field Office;
- Provide coordination of multiple task forces in the field under the direction of the ERT ESF #9 leader; and
- Coordinate logistical support of deployed task forces beyond the initial 72-hour period of self-sufficiency with the Regional Response Coordination Center ERT, and NRCC Logistics Sections.
- Task force and JMT resources may be supplemented with technical specialists in various US&R disciplines. When needed, technical specialists are mobilized by DHS/EPR/FEMA. (Note: The JMT Engineering Cell and the task forces are directly augmented by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Structures Specialist (StS) Cadre.)

Regional

- Initial Federal field response to incidents requiring US&R assistance usually begins at the regional level.
- Each DHS/EPR/FEMA Regional Office is responsible for staffing an ESF #9 position on its ERT. The Emergency Services Branch Chief or Operations Section Chief on the Advance Element of the ERT (ERT-A) may perform initial ESF #9 functions.
- Extended US&R operations requires supplemental staffing and deployment of national-level resources by DHS/EPR/FEMA.

Actions: Initial Actions

Headquarters

- The NRCC serves as the single point of contact for responding task forces and JMT members for situation information and response status of US&R resources during the initial stages of the incident. NRCC staff in ESF #9 establishes and maintains a chronological log of US&R events and information obtained from the field.
- Upon notification of an Incident of National Significance with potential or actual structural collapse, the US&R Response System staff immediately notifies the ESF #9 NRCC staff, support contractors, and the DHS/EPR/FEMA Military Support Liaison Officer of a potential need for US&R response. The NRCC staff notifies DHS/EPR/FEMA of the potential need to activate task force, JMT, and cooperative agreements.
- Upon establishing the need for US&R assets, the NRCC:
 - Develops recommendations on the type and quantity of resources to be alerted or activated;
 - Issues Activation Orders for task forces and JMT members; and
 - Issues Alert Orders placing additional task forces in a heightened state of readiness.
- If the need for US&R assets has not been established, the NRCC may:
 - Issue an advisory to all National US&R Response System task forces advising of the incident and potential need for deployment of US&R assets; and
 - Alert JMT regular or Advance Element (JMT-A) staff and USACE JMT StS Support Teams of potential deployment.

- Initial staff in the NRCC develops commitment documents and activates support agreements for supplemental staffing of the ESF #9 cell in the NRCC.
- NRCC staff collects assessment information from damage assessment teams, JMT-A members, DHS/EPR/FEMA regional officials, and State and local government officials for inclusion in situation reports and for decisionmaking regarding the need for US&R resources.

Region

- DHS/EPR/FEMA officials from the affected region designate an initial point of contact for ESF #9. This individual is part of the ERT, and may be represented on the ERT-A.
- The NRCC notifies the DHS/EPR/FEMA Regional Office responsible for the affected area. Copies of all advisories and Alert and Activation Orders issued by the NRCC are transmitted to the regional US&R point of contact for the affected region, as well as for those regions whose resident task forces have been alerted or activated.
- Initial recommendations on US&R resources to be alerted or activated are coordinated with the regional US&R point of contact. Regional US&R points of contact with alerted or activated task forces maintain contact with the sponsoring States and task forces.
- While US&R task forces and JMTs are activated at the national level, the regional ESF #9 contact provides information on the need for US&R resources. Regional officials process State requests for Federal US&R assistance.
- The regional ESF #9 representative coordinates the preparation for the arrival of task forces and JMT members and ensures the JMT is fully incorporated into the region's ERT structure.
- The regional ESF #9 representative provides overall management and coordination of all deployed US&R resources through the JMT.

- The ESF #9 representative coordinates all US&R activities with the functional groups of the ERT.
- The ESF #9 representative keeps the ESF #9 leader in the NRCC informed of all US&R field activities.

Actions: Continuing Actions

Headquarters

- Based on recommendations developed by the ESF #9 leader in the field and the JMT, decisions are made at the headquarters level on the deployment of additional US&R resources. Additional advisories and Alert and Activation Orders are issued as required.
- In the event that the incident requires the use of all national-level US&R assets, the NRCC is responsible for developing strategies for providing additional US&R support, including the use of international US&R assets, the deployment of other task forces from existing sponsoring organizations (without equipment), and the employment of US&R resources of unaffected States.
- The NRCC acts on unmet requirements for equipment and supplies forwarded from the ESF #9 leader in the field. The NRCC forwards issues involving competing requirements and scarce resource allocation to the Interagency Incident Management Group as appropriate.
- The NRCC uses the demobilization plan developed by the JMT as the basis for decisions on demobilization of US&R assets. The NRCC issues Demobilization Orders to task forces and JMT members. When coordinated with the NRCC, Demobilization Orders may be issued by the ERT.

Region

- The ERT ESF #9 leader and JMT leader establish contact with the local Incident Commander and develop a plan to integrate national US&R resources into the local incident command structure. The ESF #9 leader works with the local Incident Commander to develop written delegations of authority to national US&R resources as appropriate.
- In the event State and local emergency medical services resources are overwhelmed, the ERT ESF #9 leader, in conjunction with the JMT leader and JMT Medical Unit Leader, coordinate with field representatives of ESF #8 – Public Health and Medical Services to develop procedures for the transfer of victims extricated from collapsed structures to Disaster Medical Assistance Teams for stabilization and transport to definitive medical care locations.
- The JMT develops a mechanism for resupply of task forces operating in the affected area. The ESF #9 leader works with regional ESFs to obtain required equipment and supplies. The ESF #9 leader passes unmet or competing requirements to the NRCC for further action.
- The ESF #9 leader, in conjunction with the JMT leader, continually monitors the situation and develops recommendations on additional resources needed, as well as demobilization of existing resources.
- The JMT develops a demobilization plan for the concurrence of the ESF #9 leader. The demobilization plan includes recommended guidelines on personnel and equipment rehabilitation allowances for US&R assets. Recommendations contained in the demobilization plan are passed to the NRCC for decision.
- For incidents of extended duration, the ESF #9 leader issues a funding document to ensure feeding, shelter, salary reimbursement, and other logistical support of US&R task force and JMT resources when required.

Responsibilities

Primary Agency: DHS/EPR/FEMA

- Serves as the primary agency for ESF #9, develops national US&R policy, provides planning guidance and coordination assistance, standardizes task force procedures, evaluates task force operational readiness, funds special equipment and training requirements within available appropriations, and reimburses as appropriate task force costs incurred as a result of deployment under the NRP.

DHS/EPR/FEMA reimburses for authorized deployments to Stafford Act declaration sites. DHS/EPR/FEMA does not have the authority or funding to reimburse such activities absent a Stafford Act declaration. Non-Stafford Act deployments are reimbursed by the Federal department or agency requesting US&R assistance in accordance with provisions contained in the Financial Management Support Annex.

- Serves as headquarters-level ESF #9 coordinator.
 - Establishes, maintains, and manages the National US&R Response System. This includes pre-incident activities such as training, equipment purchase, and evaluation of operational readiness.
 - Dispatches one or more JMTs to the affected area(s).
 - Manages US&R task force deployment to, employment in, and redeployment from the affected area.
 - Coordinates logistical support for US&R assets during field operations.
 - Develops policies and procedures for the effective use and coordination of US&R assets.
 - Provides status reports on US&R operations throughout the affected area.
- Under the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS):
 - Provides administrative support to US&R task force medical teams to:
 - Ensure non-Federal medical team personnel have appropriate and valid licenses to practice in their States, and are provided Federal tort claims liability coverage for the practice of medicine; and
 - Register medical teams of each National US&R Response System task force as specialized teams under the NDMS.
 - Provides operational support to US&R task force medical teams and JMT from ESF #8 – Public Health and Medical Services, as requested by DHS, to provide liaisons; medical supplies, equipment, and pharmaceuticals; supporting personnel; and veterinary support.
 - Provides patient evacuation and continuing care after entrapped victims are removed from collapsed structures by US&R task force personnel, when State and local emergency medical services resources are overwhelmed.

Support Agencies

Agency	Responsibilities
Department of Agriculture/Forest Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops standby agreements with US&R task forces to provide equipment and supplies from the National Interagency Cache System at the time of deployment. ▪ Develops contingency plans for use of National Interagency Fire Center contract aircraft during incidents. ▪ Provides equipment and supplies from the Interagency Cache System and use of Interagency Fire Center contract aircraft.
Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acquires and disseminates weather data, forecasts, and emergency information. ▪ Provides weather information essential for efficient US&R. ▪ Predicts pollutant movement and dispersion over time (marine and atmospheric). ▪ Assesses areas of greatest hazard following a marine or atmospheric release.
Department of Defense	<p>The following DOD support may be provided when requested and approved by the Secretary of Defense:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serves as primary source for providing fixed-wing and/or rotary-wing transportation for US&R JMTs. ▪ Serves as secondary source for the following assistance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ground transportation of US&R task forces and JMTs within the affected area; ▪ Mobile feeding units for US&R task forces and JMT personnel; and ▪ Portable shelter (e.g., tents) for use by US&R task force and JMT personnel for eating, sleeping, and working.
	<p>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides pre-incident training for DHS/EPR/FEMA Task Force/JMT StS, as well as for USACE StS. ▪ At the request of DHS, deploys trained StS and Technical Search Specialist teams to supplement the US&R task forces and JMTs. ▪ Assists the JMT Engineering Cell and task forces with US&R efforts. ▪ Provides structural engineering analysis, recommends hazard mitigation, recommends shoring, ascertains structural integrity and assesses whether buildings are safe to enter, and provides building stability monitoring.
Department of Health and Human Services	<p>Provides operational support to US&R task force medical teams and JMTs from ESF #8 – Public Health and Medical Services, as requested by DHS.</p>

Agency	Responsibilities
Department of Homeland Security	U.S. Coast Guard: Assists in water rescue in areas of inundation and provides aircraft and boat assets.
	Border and Transportation Security Directorate: Customs and Border Protection (CBP) maintains Border Patrol Search, Trauma, and Rescue (BORSTAR) teams, which are highly specialized units capable of responding to emergency search and rescue situations anywhere in the United States. CBP maintains air and marine assets to support search and rescue transportation operations.
Department of Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides assistance to DHS/Office of General Counsel on the development and maintenance of tort liability claims coverage for US&R task force and JMT personnel engaged in training, mobilization, deployment, and field operations. ▪ Provides Federal Tort Claims Act guidance and claims resolution services in support of US&R training activities and field deployments.
Department of Labor (DOL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The DOL Employment Standards Administration, through its Federal Employees' Compensation Program, provides workers compensation guidance, claims resolution, and coverage for US&R task force and JMT personnel while they are engaged in training, mobilization, deployment, and field operations. ▪ DOL/Occupational Safety and Health Administration implements procedures contained in the Worker Safety and Health Support Annex to provide on-site technical assistance, including the evaluation of US&R team exposure to hazardous substances and the dangers of structural collapse. ▪ The Mine Safety and Health Administration assists with search and rescue and can provide mine rescue teams, mobile command centers, seismic location systems, TV probe systems, gas sampling analysis, and robot explorers.
Department of Transportation	Provides transportation support to US&R task forces and JMTs as requested.
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides personnel in appropriate technical disciplines, such as its Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team, to support US&R task forces and JMTs. ▪ Provides and maintains training sites for use of US&R task forces and JMT members. ▪ Assists DHS with identification as well as research and development of new technologies for first responders. ▪ Provides test-bed facilities for proof-of-concept and beta testing of new US&R technologies. ▪ Provides temporary use of facilities for mobilization centers and staging areas for US&R assets.
U.S. Agency for International Development	Provides assistance with the identification of available international search and rescue teams and their integration into National US&R Response System operations as requested.

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